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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/054,477

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Michael C. Stewart

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7590

06/15/2006

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EXAMINER

KASZTEJNA, MATTHEW JOHN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3739

DATE MAILED: 06/15/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

E

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/054,477

Applicant(s)

STEWART ET AL.

Examiner

Matthew J. Kasztejna

Art Unit

3739

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 February 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 84,85,88-100 and 103-119 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 84,85,88-100 and 103-119 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 06 February 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Notice of Amendment

In response to the amendment filed on February 6, 2006, new claims 116-119 are acknowledged. The objection to the drawing is *withdrawn*. The current rejections of claims under 35 U.S.C 102(a) to Sierocuk et al are *withdrawn*. The following new and reiterated grounds of rejection are set forth:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

Claims 84-85, 88-89, 93-94, 96-100, 103-106, 110-111 and 113-119 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,725,479 to Knight et al.

In regards to claims 84, 99 and 103-104, Knight et al. disclose a tissue dissector comprising: an elongated tube 12 having a proximal end and a distal end and enclosing endoscopic imaging fibers 5; and a dissecting, viewing and dilating unit 16 removably mounted on the tubular body distal end (see Fig. 16 and Col. 7, Lines 1-20), including; a transparent distal tip having tapered outer walls converging to a blunt end for dissecting tissue, the tip being disposed on a distal end of the dilating unit to dissect tissue and facilitate passage of the tubular body through tissue under endoscopic visualization (see Figs. 1-2); and a non-inflatable dilating element having an exterior

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contour that gradually increase in size in the proximal direction from a distal edge thereof until a maximum cross-sectional dimension greater than the cross-sectional dimension of the distal end of the tubular body, the dilating element then decreasing in size to a proximal edge, the gradual size increase and decrease therefore facilitating atraumatic expansion of tissue following dissection by the tapered distal tip (see Col. 4, Line 55 – Col. 5, Line 10).

In regards to claims 85, 100 and 103-104, Knight et al. disclose a tissue dissector having a removable dilating unit attached to the distal end of the flexible tube including a length of screw threads positioned on an outer surface of the tubular body near the distal end thereof, and wherein the dilating unit further comprises a threaded bore hole for engaging the length of screw threads and mounting the dilating unit on the distal end of the tubular body (see Fig. 16 and Col. 7, Lines 1-20).

In regards to claims 88-89 and 105-106, Knight et al. disclose a tissue dissector, wherein exterior contour of the dilating element is an oval-shape (see Figs. 4-5).

In regards to claims 93-94 and 110-111, Knight et al. disclose a tissue dissector, wherein the cross-sectional dimension of the dilating element is at least two times larger than the cross-sectional dimension of the distal end of the tubular body (see Figs. 1-2).

In regards to claims 96-97 and 113-114, Knight et al. disclose a tissue dissector, wherein the tubular body is an endoscope 5 (see Col. 4, Lines 55-67).

In regards to claims 98 and 115, Knight et al. disclose a tissue dissector, wherein the tubular body is a cannula having a lumen, the endoscopic imaging fibers being provided within an endoscope that fits within the cannula lumen and includes a fitting near its proximal end adapted to couple to a viewing camera (see Figs. 2-3).

In regards to claims 116-119, Knight et al. disclose a tissue dissector, wherein the dilating element 16 is rigid and solid (see Col. 7, Lines 21-26).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 90-92, 95, 107-109 and 112 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,725,479 to Knight et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,688,286 to Yoon.

In regards to claims 90-92, 95, 107-109 and 112, Knight et al. disclose a tissue dissector having a removable dilating unit attached to the distal end of the flexible tube but are silent with respect peripheral faceted surfaces located distally on the tip, wherein the exterior of the dilating element includes axially aligned ribs and wherein the tip is compressible. Yoon teaches of an analogous medical apparatus wherein distal end 64 is illustrated in Figs. 7 and 8 at 158 with the primary difference being that, while the inner surface 159 of "conical" wall 148 has a configuration mating with neck 48 and shoulder 50 of the trocar tip, the outer surface of wall 148 has flat sides or facets 160

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having configurations to form extensions of trocar tip facets 140 (see Col. 9, Line 59 – Col. 10, Line 21 and Col. 12, Lines 8-32). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the dilating element in the apparatus of Knight et al. with faceted surfaces to assist in dilating tissue during operation as taught by Yoon.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 84-85, 90 and 99-100 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Matthew J. Kasztejna whose telephone number is (571) 272-6086. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 8:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C.M. Dvorak can be reached on (571) 272-4764. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MJK

5/30/06



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